



# CCM Testimony

545 Long Wharf Drive., 8th Floor, New Haven, CT 06511 • 203-498-3000



## ***Housing Committee***

February 28, 2023

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 99% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

### **HB 6781 "An Act Addressing Housing Affordability for Residents in the State"**

HB 6781 would make various changes addressing housing affordability within the state. CCM appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation and believe it's a good first step to addressing affordability with suggested changes for the committee to consider.

Section 1 of the bill would enable municipalities to issue civil penalties for violation of local regulations in regards to the maintenance of safe and sanitary housing. CCM supports this provision as it will give municipal officials more authority to address compliance issues and promote public safety within their communities. Municipalities should have these tools at their disposal to manage these issues and improve conditions for residents living in their towns and cities.

Section 9 of the bill would enable a municipality the ability to require a nonresident owner, project-based housing provider or corporation owning rental property to report identifying information and residential address to the tax assessor. CCM believes this will increase transparency and supports this provision.

Section 23 of the bill creates an Office of Responsible Growth within the Office of Policy and Management. CCM has advocated for cooperative land-use planning among the State, towns and cities, and regions and believe it can strengthen communities, preserve the environment and help the economy. CCM supports a central office to partner with municipalities to help coordinate planning, incentive efforts, and interagency coordination.

Section 24 would require municipalities to adopt plans that affirmatively further fair housing, which are subject to approval by the Office of Responsible Growth (ORG). Furthermore, the section would require the municipality to submit a sworn statement that the community is in compliance with affirmatively furthering fair housing and attest that they would be ineligible for discretionary funding for failing to comply. CCM is concerned with the lack of recourse and appeal process provided to municipalities in this section if it is alleged that the city or town is not in compliance, which is subject to approval by the Coordinator of the ORG. In addition, CCM is concerned with the discretion the office has regarding these plans and the lack of details or parameters that will be considered.



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Additionally, CCM **opposes** the penalties imposed in lines 832-836 without a clear understanding of the criteria necessary to achieve approval through the ORG. We are concerned that (1) these penalties will not provide for the desired outcome, and (2) that state funding is being withheld from municipalities given the dire economic reality our local governments are facing today and out into the future. With no prescribed methodology, to determine a municipality's compliance in this section, there is no check or balance within the language related to the ORG's authority and no recourse or appeal process prescribed for a municipality that is not approved by the coordinator.

Section 25 establishes a task force on plans to expand sewer capacity. CCM supports this provision and would ask the committee to add municipal representation on the task force as lack of water and sewer infrastructure, especially in sparsely populated communities, is a large roadblock for municipalities trying to create more affordable housing stock.

Section 26 adds a "as of right" definition to 8-30g statute and would award points for "as of right" middle housing developments within ¼ mile of transit districts. CCM understands the importance of developing housing around transit districts and believes this section is an innovative way to incentivize municipalities.

Section 33 appears to eliminate the conveyance tax for deed-restricted properties defined as affordable. The conveyance tax is one of the few municipal diversification revenue items that a municipality has at its disposal. CCM asks the committee to hold municipalities harmless for the municipal portion of the conveyance tax as any lost revenue would put a strain on a municipality's overreliance on the property tax. CCM **opposes** any elimination of the municipal portion of the conveyance tax.

Lastly, CCM supports the increase funding in Coordinated Access Networks and the Rental Assistance Program. The increases in funding will assist renters to avoid evictions and help individuals experiencing homelessness.

CCM wants to partner with the state and be a part of the affordable housing solutions - HB 6781 starts to address these important issues. We are committed to working with the legislature and stakeholders as the bill moves through the legislative process. We have been and continue to be dedicated to hearing different ideas, offering suggestions and finding common ground. We look forward to productive and constructive dialogue and hope the committee considers our recommended changes.

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If you have any questions, please contact [Zachary McKeown](#), Senior Legislative Associate of CCM.